

1. A method for selectively controlling supplied power to an ink melt heater for maintaining a desired ink melt rate despite a varying ambient parameter affecting an actual melt rate, comprising:

supplying a predetermined amount of power to the ink melt heater intended to cause the desired ink melt rate;

detecting an ambient parameter to the ink melt heater;

determining if the detected ambient parameter will cause a variance in the actual ink melt rate from the desired ink melt rate; and,

adjusting supplied power from the predetermined amount to an adjusted amount for realizing the desired ink melt rate.

2. The method as defined in claim 1 wherein detecting the ambient parameter comprises sensing a factor representative of at least one of local environment air temperature or adjacent ink temperature.

3. The method as defined in claim 2 wherein the sensing of the factor representative of adjacent ink temperature is made prior to a start of a melt duty cycle.

4. A system for adapting power control to an ink melt heater for changing phase of an ink stick from solid to liquid at a selected melt rate, comprising:

a tray for holding a solid phase ink stick and having an open end for egress of liquid phase ink during heating;

a heater disposed at the open end to contact the ink stick;

a reservoir disposed near the heater for receiving the liquid phase ink after heating;

a power supply for supplying energy to the heater;

a control circuit for adjusting the supplied energy; and,

a sensor for sensing a parameter consequential to an ink melt rate wherein the control circuit adjusts the supplied energy during a melt duty cycle to compensate for a consequential effect of the sensed parameter.

5. The system as defined in claim 4 wherein the parameter comprises a temperature of the solid phase ink prior to the melt duty cycle.

6. The system as defined in claim 4 wherein the parameter comprises a factor representative of convection losses to the heater during the melt duty cycle.

7. The system as defined in claim 6 wherein the factor comprises local ambient temperature to the system.

8. The system as defined in claim 4 wherein the sensor comprises a thermistor associated with the heater.

9. The system as defined in claim 8 wherein the heater includes a plate having a first portion disposed to engage the solid phase ink stick and a second portion spaced from the ink stick and wherein the thermistor is associated with the second portion.

10. An assembly for heating a solid ink supply for changing a phase of the supply from solid to liquid at a desired melt rate including:

means for holding the solid ink supply to facilitate the heating and permit communication of the melted ink therefrom;

means for heating the solid ink supply;

a power supply for supplying energy to the heating means;

means for sensing a parameter affecting melt rate of the supply;

a control circuit for adjusting the supplied energy to the heating means in response to the sensed parameter wherein the adjusted supplied energy will maintain the desired melt rate.

11. The assembly as claimed in claim 10 wherein the parameter comprises at least one of either local ambient temperature or a starting temperature of the solid phase ink stick prior to a melt cycle.

12. The assembly as claimed in claim 11 wherein the means for sensing comprises a thermistor associated with the heating means.

13. The assembly as claimed in claim 12 wherein the control circuit includes a timer for timing elapsed time from completion of the melt cycle, and the thermistor detects the starting temperature of the ink stick within a selected period of the elapsed time and detects the local ambient temperature after expiration of the selected period.

14. The assembly as defined in claim 13 wherein the heating means includes a plate for engaging the ink stick and the plate includes a fin portion depending therefrom, and wherein the thermistor detects a temperature of the fin portion.